

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

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INFO AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

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TAGS: SGEN

SUBJ: HUMAN RIGHTS -- REQUEST OF REFUGEE FOR US

ASSISTANCE IN PERSUADING ROMANIAN GOVERNMENT TO
PERMIT HIS WIFE TO LEAVE ROMANIA

1. SUMMARY. ROMANIAN REFUGEE, VIRGIL POPESCU, IN US UNDER A.G. PAROLE AUTHORITY, NOW ENTERING SECOND MONTH OF HUNGER STRIKE OUTSIDE UN IN PROTEST REFUSAL OF ROMANIAN GOVERNMENT TO ALLOW HIS WIFE TO LEAVE ROMANIA. POPESCU'S ACTION VERY DAMAGING TO ROMANIAN GOVERNMENT'S IMAGE AT TIME WHEN UN CELEBRATING 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS, WHICH GOR APPARENTLY VIOLATING IN THIS INSTANCE. PROMINENT LOCAL US-ROMANIANS COMPRISING COMMITTEE FOR FAMILY REUNION ACCOMPANIED POPESCU IN CALL ON AMBASSADOR FERGUSON SEPT 18 TO REQUEST USUN ASSISTANCE IN CASE. MISSION REQUESTS GUIDANCE IN RESPONDING TO COMMITTEE FOR FAMILY REUNION. END SUMMARY

2. SINCE AUG 19 VIRGIL POPESCU, 30-YEAR-OLD ROMANIAN REFUGEE WHO FLED COUNTRY IN JULY 1972 HAS BEEN ON HUNGER STRIKE IN PROTEST AGAINST REFUSAL OF ROMANIAN GOVERNMENT TO PERMIT HIS WIFE CRISTINA TO LEAVE ROMANIA AND JOIN HIM IN US. SEATED IN CAMP CHAIR OPPOSITE MAIN ENTRANCE TO
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UN, WITH SIGN EXPLAINING REASON FOR HIS HUNGER STRIKE,

POPESCU IS HIGHLY VISIBLE TO EVERYONE NOW ATTENDING 28TH GA. AT WHICH HUMAN RIGHTS AND SPECIFICALLY FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT ARE PROMINENT AGENDA ITEMS.

3. WHEN AMBASSADOR BENNETT RECENTLY QUERIED ROMANIAN PERM REP RE THIS MATTER, LATTER STATES WIFE DID NOT WISH TO LEAVE ROMANIA AND JOIN POPESCU BECAUSE HE HAD MALTREATED HER.

4. ON SEPT 18 POPESCU, WITH DELEGATION OF THREE PROMINENT MEMBERS LOCAL ROMANIAN COMMUNITY, PHYSICALLY SUPPORTING HIM, AS HE IS NOW APPARENTLY TOO WEAK TO WALK UNAIDED, CALLED UPON AMBASSADOR CLYDE FERGUSON, US REPRESENTATIVE TO ECOSOC, TO REQUEST US ASSISTANCE IN PERSUADING GOR TO PERMIT CRISTINA POPESCU TO JOIN HUSBAND HERE. CONTRARY TO GOR'S POSITION THEY CONTENDED WIFE HAS BEEN DEPRIVED OF WORK AND THREATENED BY SECRET POLICE FOR WISHING TO LEAVE COUNTRY. AS EVIDENCE THEY PRESENTED LETTER OF SEPT 5 FROM EDWARD STARR, AMERICAN CONSUL, BUCHAREST, TO POPESCU STATING THAT HIS WIFE HAD VISITED CONSULATE AND HAD INFORMED HIM SHE WISHES TO LEAVE AND JOIN HIM, BUT HAS BEEN DENIED THE RIGHT TO EMIGRATE.

5. POPESCU HAS SUBMITTED HIS COMPLAINT TO THE WORKING GROUP OF HUMAN RIGHTS SUB-COMMISSION BUT THIS ORGANIZATION DOES NOT GENERALLY ACT ON COMPLAINTS OF INDIVIDUALS, SINCE ITS PURPOSE IS RATHER TO OBTAIN PATTERNS OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS BY GOVERNMENTS.

6. POPESCU ALSO PETITIONED ROMANIAN COUNSUL, NICOLAE IRINOIU, IN WASHINGTON BUT HIS PETITION WAS ANGRILY REJECTED. HE CLAIMS CONSUL EVEN THREATENED TO KILL HIM SHOULD HE UNDERTAKE HUNGER STRIKE IN PROTEST.

7. AMBASSADOR FERGUSON EXPLAINED LIMITATIONS ON US ABILITY TO ASSIST POPESCU, BUT AGREED TO CONSULT DEPT IMMEDIATELY. HE ALSO RECOMMENDED COMITE FOR FAMILY REUNION SEND AMERICAN CITIZEN TO CONSUL IRINOIU TO REQUEST RECONSIDERATION OF POPESCU'S PETITION WHICH VISITORS AGREED TO DO.

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COMMENT: AS COMITE FOR FAMILY REUNION POINTS OUT GOR REFUSAL TO PERMIT CRISTINA POPESCU TO LEAVE COUNTRY APPEARS TO BE CLEAR VIOLATION OF ARTICLE 13(2) OF UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS. DEC 10 OF THIS YEAR MARKS 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF UNIVERSAL DECLARATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS WILL BE PROMINENT FEATURE OF THIS YEAR'S GA. POPESCU CASE HAS ALREADY RECEIVED PRESS COVERAGE. WITH WEATHER GROWING COLDER POPESCU VISIBLY WEAKENING AND COULD CONCEIVABLY

DIE FEW YARDS FROM WHERE ANNIVERSARY OF HUMAN RIGHTS
DECLARATION BEING CELEBRATED.

ACTION REQUESTED: GUIDANCE ON USUN REPLY TO COMITE FOR
FAMILY REUNION.
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